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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0661
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5620
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 3295
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1457
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1433
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2432
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 4101
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5133
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2732
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3266
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1284
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 3106
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002107

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: GOI PREPARATIONS FOR 2009 ELECTIONS

REF: A. JAKARTA 1827
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 450

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Preparations for Indonesia's legislative and presidential elections in 2009 are well underway. Solid organizational progress has been made in what is an immense undertaking slated to involve approximately 175 million voters in this, the world's third largest democracy.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): That said, even while new laws have augmented its mandate, the Indonesian Election Commission has been affected by a lack of funding and other capacity-related problems. At this point, the Commission seems to have the situation in hand and--despite delays--is meeting targets. There are concerns that snafus could develop, however, and that there could be problems, especially if the elections are close. END SUMMARY.

GETTING READY FOR 2009

[1](#)3. (C) The Indonesian Election Commission (KPU) continues to work hard to prepare for the 2009 national elections. (Note: Legislative elections are scheduled to take place in April [1](#)2009. The first round of the presidential elections are scheduled for July and will be followed by a second round if necessary.) The KPU has made considerable progress preparing for the elections. Already, party and candidate lists have been published for the legislative elections, and the voter lists are almost complete. Over 175 million Indonesians are expected to vote in 2009, a figure considerably higher than the number that voted in 2004 (the 2004 elections were Indonesia's first set of direct elections).

[1](#)4. (C) When asked about the situation during a November 14 meeting, Sri Nuryanti, a key KPU Commissioner, told Pol/C and poloff that she was "confident" that the Commission would be able to meet all targets. She admitted, however, that there were challenges to overcome. (Note: Nuryanti just returned

from a USG-funded visit to the U.S. to observe our elections.

In addition to meetings in Washington, Nuryanti met with election officials in Connecticut and spoke at Yale University on the Indonesian electoral process.)

NEW MANDATES

15. (C) As touched on by Sri Nuryanti, the Election Commission is facing some problems. The new electoral legal frameworks promulgated in 2008 and earlier greatly expanded the KPU's mandate to include administering regional as well as national elections. The law did not increase the KPU's capacity or funding, however. Instead, legal checks were put in place to avoid the corruption which plagued the previous Commission. These checks--while prudent--delay the disbursement of funds to the KPU. Implementing these new laws and regulations has further strained KPU's already limited resources (reftels).

OTHER CONCERNS

16. (C) There are other concerns. The KPU faces criticism for frequently traveling overseas--including a trip to China which generated widespread public derision. NGOs such as the Election Monitoring Society criticize the KPU for missing deadlines to publish candidate and voter lists and inconsistent reviews of party and candidate eligibility. The KPU has also found it difficult to resolve disputes over regional elections.

17. (C) Missing the original target date to publish the legislative candidate lists also gave the public less time to scrutinize the lists and provide feedback on candidates who

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might be unqualified. While the KPU did publish the list soon after the target date, it has no legal sanctions available to make political parties comply with the law, so some candidates with criminal records and other problematic backgrounds are apparently still on the lists.

18. (C) The KPU also found it difficult to finalize voter registration lists by the legally mandated October 10 deadline, so have extended the deadline to November 24. Millions of votes are at stake because of incomplete data. In the recent meeting with emboffs, KPU Commissioner Sri Nuryanti gave two reasons for the delay. First, according to a new law, the Commission had to get population data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and what they received was incomplete. Second, as of yet, the Commission has not been able to receive voter information from the Papuan region of eastern Indonesia and from overseas.

19. (C) Another challenge is dissemination of voter information. Many voters are unaware that they must confirm their registration. According to a recent poll, the majority of voters still don't know when the legislative elections will be held. They are also unaware of changes in the election law. KPU Commissioner Sri Nuryanti explained that the Commission hopes to correct this when it releases its new public service announcements and fliers (done through the USG-funded International Foundation for Elections).

WORKING TO MEET THE CHALLENGES

10. (C) Since the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesian democracy has flowered spectacularly. But there are some administrative problems and the KPU seems to be making a solid effort to address them. It is well aware of the problems stemming from the complicated new electoral framework, and it is trying to improve cooperation and coordination within the government in order to facilitate the process.

11. (C) Despite the concerns, there is confidence. The KPU--and the vast majority of observers--believe that the

upcoming elections will be free, fair and credible. Polls indicate that the public shares this confidence. That said, various snafus could take place in the run up to the elections and on Election Day. If the elections are very close, then there could be problems as candidates challenge the process.

HUME